



## Franklin Regional Council of Governments



June 7, 2018

Shonda D. Green, Secretary  
Massachusetts Department of Telecommunications and Cable  
1000 Washington Street, Suite 820  
Boston, MA 02118-6500

Re. Support of Enhanced 911 Surcharge

Dear Secretary Green,

Across the Commonwealth the state of emergency communications has been steadily declining due to age of existing infrastructure and the forward progress of technology. The critical link between Public Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) and public safety professionals has never been more tenuous. The equipment that makes the communication cycle between PSAPs and first responders possible needs to be upgraded throughout the Commonwealth in order to address the current system's issues and to meet the demands of the future.

Currently, the radio equipment first responders use to receive and transmit lifesaving information is more than a decade old and have been heavily used. This equipment is well past its normal working lifespan. The equipment at tower locations, which provides for the transfer of information across great distances, is also more than a decade old. This aging equipment does not perform as well as it should given the importance of the messages it carries.

In addition, the level of radio communication technology has moved forward at a staggering rate from the last system improvement over fifteen years ago. Moving from a largely analog system to a fully digital system will allow for great flexibility and a marked improvement in communication clarity. This system change is analogous to going from listening to your favorite song on AM radio and then switching to satellite radio. When a person calls a PSAP they expect and deserve their needs to be transmitted to the responding unit in the most clear and consistent way possible. The best way for clear communication is through the proposed improvements to the statewide system.

The connection between Public Safety Answering Points and the radio equipment it uses to transmit lifesaving information is inexorably bound. Due to this relationship the importance of supporting the proposed fifty cent increase to the current one dollar telecom surcharge is of utmost significance for all citizens of Massachusetts. It is imperative that we support the infrastructure on which 911 operators use to reach those that call for help.

Sincerely,

Linda L. Dunlavy, Executive Director